

Close Reading Tips for the Exam: Standard Grade

The Basics

Read each question twice and underline the key words.

Example question: What were the reasons for the headmaster's resignation?

Always look at the mark scheme to find out how many Answers you will need to give.

2/0 Give one good answer

2/1/0 Give two separate answers

2/1/0 Questions which ask for three answers are
 awarded: 2 marks for 3 correct answers
 1 mark for 2 correct answers
 0 marks for 1 correct answer

You do not have to answer in sentences – it is a good Idea to bullet point your answer.

Example question: What two reasons are given for his confusion?

Good answer: - he did not have all the facts
 - the map in front of him was old.

Do not waste time repeating the question

Example: Show how the writer continues the idea of fear

Bad answer: The writer continues the idea of fear by...

Typical Questions

Answer in your own words.

Find the words in the passage that give the correct answer.

Identify the main words.

Change the main words for similar words.

Example: He had suffered many a misfortune. He had been sacked from his post after just one week and his faithful hound Bertie had left for the great boneyard in the sky right after.

Question: What misfortunes had he suffered? 2/1/0

Answer: - he had lost his job
 - his dog had died

Questions on behaviour

Here you must say what a person does – not how they feel.

Example: He grumpily yanked the door open and thrust his head outside. Dark skies. Too cold for a walk. He simply shut the door again and went back to bed.

Question: What aspects of his behaviour suggest that he does not want to go outside?

Answer: - he pulled the door open roughly as if annoyed.
 - he put only his head outside rather than his whole body.

Questions on Attitude

Here you must say what person or character feels.

Try to use a single word

Avoid basic answers like 'good' or 'bad'

Example: Mrs Pratchett was becoming increasingly anxious about her precious china. As the children left, she sighed deeply and returned to her duties.

Question: What is Mrs. Pratchett's attitude to the children? 2/1/0

Answer: - she is worried by them
 - she is relieved when they leave

Questions on Contrast

Two answers that are opposite to each other are needed.

Example: Harry was a fighter. Johnny, on the other hand, was a coward who would run at the first sign of trouble.

Question: What contrast is shown in the behaviour of the two men?

Answer: - Harry would stand up for himself
 - Johnny would flee from problems

Questions on sentence Structure

Here you must look at the way the sentences are put together.

Do **NOT** comment on what is said in the passage.

Look for the following:

Commas, dashes, colons, question marks,
exclamation marks, ellipsis, non-sentences, complex
sentenced, listing, parenthesis, repetition, brackets

Example: Mr. Jones had been very busy that day.
 He had (among other things) cooked
 breakfast, washed the dishes, dusted the
 living room, walked the dog... The list
 went on.

Question: By commenting on sentence structure,
 show how the writer gives the impression
 that Mr. Jones had been very busy. 2/1/0

Answer: - listing all the many activities carried out.
 - using ellipsis to show the list continues.